

his daily life and he must observe many of the above restrictions (*viz.* Nos. 1, 4, 6--10, 12, and 13).

1.—No yam may be brought into the house, lest the child may get a cough—(*Midap kuduk*).

2.—No tuba or shoot of a bamboo may be brought into the house, lest it cause sickness of any sort to the child.

3.—No stranger would be allowed into the room where the mother and child lay for fear of sudden shock to either. After the lapse of sixteen days, a feast is held, to which the mid-wife (*penading*), relations and friends are invited.

The *penading* alone may hand food to the child and its parents.

[*From notes communicated by Simigaat, a Land-Dayak of Quop.*] ED.

Tau Tepang.

This is a curious superstitious belief prevalent among all the tribes of the Sea-Dayaks, and particularly so with those tribes who live far in the interior, away from all civilisation.

Tau Tepang people are supposed to have the power of inflicting all sorts of disasters on villages, people, crops, etc., and the manner of this is distinctly startling; for it is only *the head* of a *Tau Tepang* person that can do the harm and the belief is, that during the night the head leaves the *Tau Tepang* person's body, returning in the early morning after having accomplished its work of evil.

This power can only be inherited, and of course there are several stories to account for its origin, no two tribes believing in the same version. The following was told to me by Majeng, the Government chief in the Undup :—

Once upon a time an enormous snake called *Nabau** fell down from the heavens, doing incalculable harm

* [Some Saribas Dayaks say that *Nabau* was so enormous that he merely reached down from the skies to eat up the paddy; and it was not until the people had blown several poisoned darts into his body that he fell down to earth altogether]. ED.

to the paddy crops, for its body covered no less than three large fields. The alarm was sounded and hundreds of people came rushing up to kill the monster. After some time this was accomplished and the remains of the great snake were boiled and eaten; then—to borrow a Dayak phrase—‘when the sun was still about the height of a *sengkuar*† from the horizon,’ the army of people moved off homewards amid many triumphant jubilations. The evening was passed in further rejoicing and festivities in honour of the great victory over their enemy; and it was well past midnight before all the revellers turned in to rest. Next morning a curious calm seemed to have settled on the village, although it did not deter the inhabitants from going about their various duties; soon it developed into deep gloom, no laughter and chattering among the children, no light-hearted ban-dinage among the young men; for the spirit of the great snake *Nabau* had visited everyone of them in their sleep that night and his anger knew no bounds. The wrathful spirit had made known to everyone that those who had eaten his tongue would henceforth become *Tau Tepang*, while those that had eaten his heart would become clever and brave, and those that had eaten his stomach would become dull and slothful. At last an old man, with the exclamation “Akai” broke the oppressive silence and related his dream, which proved to be the same experienced by all.

Thus the origin of this superstition among the Sea-Dayaks of the Undup; and the narrator, Majeng, went on to say that in the memory of his father a *Tau Tepang* person was found headless in his bed; but that as soon as the alarm was given the head returned almost immediately. This was regarded as a proof positive of the old story and the Undups (as well as other Sea-Dayaks) believe to this day that a *Tau Tepang* person (*i. e.* his head) travels about in the darkness of the night working mischief.

A *Tau Tepang* person is looked upon with great dread; every evil that befalls the village is ascribed

† *Sengkuar* is a bamboo about 18 feet long used to drive away fowls from paddy which has been put out to dry on the platform outside a Dayak house.

to him; he has the greatest difficulty in obtaining a wife, unless she is of a *Tau Tepang* family too; in many villages he lives the life of a leper, and in olden days had to live apart from the rest of the village. Dayaks aver that every *Tau Tepang* person is destined to supernatural punishment and that he will not share with the rest of mankind the comfort and happiness of Hades.

Hardly a paddy farm exists that is not guarded by some kinds of charms called *serepak*, *perepak* and *sekuti*. These charms are made in various forms, some in the likeness of animals, and all are closely dressed with sharp spikes made from the *temiang* bamboo, so that they may prick the face and eyes of any *Tau Tepang* person who may try to do harm to their crops. When these charms are set up in the paddy fields prayers are said over them in order to render them effectual against the dread *Tau Tepang*.

When a man accused of this, wishes to vindicate himself, a diving contest is arranged and a large bet is laid. If he wins he takes the stakes and he and all his kin are washed from the stain of *Tau Tepang* for ever.

W. HOWELL.

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[The following additional information has been given me by Mr. Ansin of the Sarawak Museum, referring in this case to the Lemanak Sea-Dayaks—near neighbours of the Undups.

Their story is, that long ago a widow named Garuda committed incest with her son Impang, and their sin was visited on the Lemanak people; for immediately after, a great serpent, *Tadong Bulan* by name, descended from the sky and destroyed all their paddy. The people on arriving in the morning, saw to their horror, the complete disaster that had befallen them in the night, so they took counsel with their chief, one *Blikau*, and determined to watch next night for their unknown enemy. Sure enough, soon after dark, the serpent again descended, causing the utmost consternation among the waiting men, some of whom were inclined to leave it unharmed, but others urged on by *Blikau* attacked

it, eventually killing it. Then they divided it into two portions and those that ate the head portion became possessed of the power of *Tau Tepang*.

Later on, the cause of all this trouble became known, and the guilty pair, Garuda and Impang, were put to death, being buried in the same grave, impaled on a bamboo, and this bamboo—now grown to an enormous size—may be seen to this very day on the banks of the river Kumpang in the Lemanak district, where it is known as “Ayur Tampun Impang” (“Impang’s bamboo”).

When a child is born to a *Tau Tepang* family, the parents are said to cut the edge of the child’s tongue and then the mother touches the cut with her spittle, and thus the child will inherit the power of *Tau Tepang*.

The ghosts of the *Tau Tepang* are said by the Dayaks to be a sort of bird, which flies at night making a curious quacking sound.

Dayaks have a great dread of the power of these people and on their paddy farms they dare not breathe the name *Tau Tepang*.] ED.
